



## **Testimony to the Aging Committee**

**Presented by Mag Morelli, President, LeadingAge Connecticut**

**February 5, 2015**

**Regarding**

- **SB 706, An Act Concerning Mandated Reporters Of Elderly Abuse**
- **SB 707, An Act Concerning Notification Of The State's Interest In Protecting Nursing Home Residents**
- **HB 6394, An Act Increasing Funding For Elderly Nutrition**
- **HB 6396, An Act Concerning An Income Tax Deduction For Long-Term Care Insurance Premiums**

Good morning Senator Flexer, Representative Serra, and members of the Aging Committee. My name is Mag Morelli and I am the President of LeadingAge Connecticut, a membership organization representing mission-driven and not-for-profit provider organizations serving older adults across the continuum of long term care, services and supports and including senior housing. On behalf of LeadingAge Connecticut, I would like to testify on four of the bills that are before you today and offer the Committee our assistance as you consider these various issues.

### **Senate Bill 706, An Act Concerning Mandated Reporters of Elder Abuse**

Prevention of elder abuse is a priority for LeadingAge Connecticut members and we therefore support this proposed bill which if passed, would strengthen our current mandated reporter law by including emergency medical technicians in the list of mandated reporters responsible for reporting suspected incidents of elder abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment. This proposal was included in the recommendations of the Senior Safety Zone Task Force which were submitted to the General Assembly on January 1, 2015. The task force recognized that first responders were critical to the identification of seniors in crisis and that adding them to the list of mandated reporters would be an additional step that could be taken to help prevent elder abuse and neglect in the community.

### **Senate Bill 707, An Act Concerning Notifications of the State's Interest in Protecting Nursing Home Residents**

LeadingAge Connecticut has no objection to this proposed bill as it is written. The proposed bill reflects the language that was agreed upon between LeadingAge Connecticut and other interested parties in previous legislative sessions and we appreciate the Committee's recognition of that agreement.

### **House Bill 6394, An Act Increasing Funding for Elderly Nutrition**

LeadingAge Connecticut supports this bill which acknowledges the need to increase the fee schedule rates for meals on wheels deliveries provided through the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders

(CHCPE). The bill proposes to raise the fees to reflect the reasonable costs of providing the meals and to minimize any copayments incurred by participants in said program.

Affordable, nutritious meals are essential to the health and well-being of many CHCPE clients. For many, the meal they receive through meals on wheels is the only nutritious meal they can afford. But the costs associated with the delivery of home delivered meals have dramatically increased over the last several years and while the CHCPE rates were increased by 1% on January 1, the rates still do not yet meet the cost of providing the home delivered meals.

This proposal also appears to establish an annual increase for the entire Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders fee schedule and we applaud that initiative. LeadingAge Connecticut has been working to encourage the state to invest in the entire community based provider network that is caring for the older adults enrolled in the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE). We are very appreciative of the 1% rate increase that was given to all providers in the program on January 1 and we look forward to reviewing the CHCPE rate study that was mandated by last year's legislation. This study was to be conducted by the Department of Social Services (DSS) to analyze the costs of providing services under the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders as well as the pilot program to provide home care services to persons with disabilities under the age of 65. (DSS is to submit a report of the study to the Human Services and Appropriations Committees of the General Assembly.) This study will offer the opportunity to determine what the appropriate rates should be to cover the reasonable costs of providing these home and community based services and assist the state in developing a plan to achieve those levels of reimbursement.

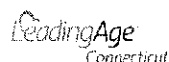
Helping people to stay in the community is a basic goal of our state's long term care plan and a strong elderly nutrition program is central to the success of that goal. We urge the Committee to support the elderly nutrition program and the other community based services offered through the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders. The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders is the heart and soul of our rebalancing plan and it is vital that we continue to address the need for adequate and reasonable rates for all of the providers within the program.

#### **House Bill 6396, An Act Concerning an Income Tax Deduction for Long-Term Care Insurance Premiums**

LeadingAge Connecticut supports this effort to encourage individuals to purchase long term care insurance and to take personal responsibility for the financing of their future long term care expenses.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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*LeadingAge Connecticut is a membership organization representing over 130 mission-driven and not-for-profit provider organizations serving older adults across the continuum of care including nursing homes, residential care homes, housing for the elderly, continuing care retirement communities, adult day centers, home care and assisted living agencies. By*

*continuing a tradition of mission-driven, consumer-centered management and competent, hands-on care, not-for-profits set the standard in the continuum of housing, care and services for the most vulnerable aging adults.*